

DISPOSABLE CAMERA MOUNTING BRACKETBackground and Summary of the Invention

The present invention is directed to a camera bracket. More particularly, the present invention is directed to a mounting bracket for a disposable camera to permit photographing of wildlife, and the like, by use of a trip wire.

Obtaining a photograph of a critter by actuation of a trip wire can be beneficial in several circumstances. Among them is obtaining a snapshot of a game animal known to traverse a particular trail. Another might be getting a picture of a four legged creature disturbing a person's garden so as to determine how best to deter the pesky varmint. Yet another, could be catching a two-legged intruder on film to present evidence to the law enforcement authorities to facilitate capture and conviction.

Whatever the particular need for photographing a critter, these situations avail themselves well to the disposable cameras currently available. However, there is not a suitable, inexpensive mounting bracket which will enable these photos to be taken. It is the object of the present invention to fill that need.

The present invention comprises a mounting bracket for a disposable camera to enable a photograph to be taken of a critter such as a game animal, or the like, where the bracket includes: an open-ended enclosure which has a top, a bottom, a front and a back panel for surrounding the disposable camera, the front panel having openings accommodating a camera lens and a flash; means for mounting the bracket to a tree, post, or other object; a trigger actuator pivotally mounted to said enclosure, the trigger actuator having a button which engages a trigger switch on the camera; means on the trigger actuator for engagement by a trip wire; whereby the bracket may be secured to a tree by the means for mounting, the trip wire secured to the means for engagement and stretched across a path likely to be traveled by the critter, and the disposable camera inserted into said mounting

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bracket where the button on the trigger actuator is positioned above the trigger switch of the camera.

5 The preferred embodiment of the mounting bracket of present invention includes an awning means positioned on the front panel above the opening accommodating the camera lens to shield the lens from precipitation and direct sunlight. Further, it is preferred that the mounting bracket be comprised of a single piece of plastic having three living hinges and means permitting the enclosure to be snapped together and retained in its operative position. The mounting bracket enclosure includes a bushing and the trigger actuator has a pair of arms which engage over the bushing enabling it to pivot thereabout.

10 Various other features, advantages and characteristics of the present invention will become apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art after a reading of the following specification.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The preferred embodiment(s) of the present invention is/are described in conjunction with the associated drawings in which like features are indicated with like reference numerals and in which

Fig. 1 is a front perspective view of a first embodiment of the mounting bracket of the present invention;

Fig. 2A is a top perspective view of the trigger actuator of the first embodiment;

Fig. 2B is a top perspective view of the bracket enclosure shown in its as molded condition;

Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional side view of the bracket enclosure as seen along lines 3-3 of **Fig. 1**; and

Fig. 4 is a schematic depiction showing the first embodiment in use.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiment(s)

A first embodiment of the mounting bracket of the present invention is shown in **Fig. 1** generally at **20**. Mounting bracket **20** comprises an open-ended enclosure **22** made of a durable plastic and having a top panel **24**, a bottom panel **30**, a front panel **40** and a back panel **60**. Top panel **22** has a first downwardly extending flange **26** and a second downwardly extending flange **27** (**Fig. 2B**). These flanges **26, 27** provide some protection against the elements. Bottom panel **30** has a first laterally extending rib **32** and a second laterally extending rib **34** upon which the bottom of a disposable camera **11** (**Fig. 4**) sits. Each rib, **32, 34** has a stop detent **35** which limits movement of the camera when it is inserted from the left hand end (as seen in **Fig. 1**) to position the lens behind opening **42** formed in front panel **40** while positioning a flash (if any) behind opening **44**. Spring detent **36A** formed on spring arm **36B** deflects downwardly to permit camera **11** to pass during insertion and back upwardly beside the camera to retain it within the enclosure. A pair of extending flanges **36, 36'** extend rearwardly from front edge **37** overlying openings **38, 38'** respectively, (**Fig. 3**). A first living hinge **28**, connects front panel **40** to top panel **24**, while a second living hinge **28'**

connects top panel 24 to back panel 60, and third living hinge 28'' connects back panel 60 to bottom panel 30.

Front panel 40 has a protruding portion 46 which accommodates a forward extending lens of disposable camera 11. An awning 48 extends outwardly above opening 42 and protects the camera's lens from precipitation and direct sunlight, which could cause the lens to close too rapidly, adversely affecting the picture. A first bushing 50 is mounted on the inner surface 52 of front panel 40 and serves as a rotational pivot for trigger actuator arm 70 (Fig. 2B). Bushing 50 has an aperture 54 that receives guide pin 64 which extends upwardly from second bushing 66 to properly align the front panel 40 and the rear panel 60. Two latching fingers 56, 56' are shown extending outwardly from lower edge 57 of front panel 40. While two have been shown, it will be appreciated that the number of latching fingers can be two or more, without departing from the spirit of the invention.

Each finger 56, 56' has a tapered leading surface 58, 58' and an upwardly directed catch surface 59, 59' respectively, that engage under extending flanges 36, 36' to retaining the mounting bracket 20 together. Tapered leading surfaces 58, 58' facilitate snapping the fingers 56, 56' beneath flanges 36, 36'. Lower edge 47 of front panel 40 engages front edge 37 of bottom panel 30 to complete the enclosure.

Back panel 60 has a plurality of openings (shown in the figures as four in number) which permit the mounting bracket 20 to be attached to a tree 15 using cord (or wire) 17. Trigger actuator arm 70 has two claws 72, 72' which engage first and second bushings 50, 66, respectively, to permit pivoting of arm 70. Trigger actuator arm 70 has an actuator button 76 which is positioned over the trigger switch of disposable camera 11. Trigger actuator arm 70 is provided with an aperture 78 that serves as means to attach trip wire 13. It will be appreciated that the means to attach can take any number of alternate forms.

It will be understood that to assemble the mounting bracket 20 to form a camera-receiving enclosure, the three living hinges 28, 28', 28'' are folded making sure that guide pin 64 enters aperture 54. Then, fingers 56, 56' are snapped into openings 38, 38' so that upwardly directed surfaces 59, 59' are engaged under flanges 36, 36'. Claws 72, 72' or trigger actuator arm 70 are then

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snapped in place over bushings **50, 66**, with means for attaching **78** extending out the right side of the open-ended enclosure. Once cord **17** is used to attach the camera mounting bracket **20** to tree **17**, or other object, using holes **62**, camera **11** can be inserted into the left end of the enclosure formed by bracket **20**. By pushing the camera **11** over spring detent **36A** until it engages stop detents **35**, the lens **19** will peer through opening **32**, flash will be positioned behind opening **44** and button **76** will be positioned above the trigger switch on camera **11**. Trip wire **13** can then be attached to means for attaching **78** and stretched across the path of the critter whose picture is to be taken.

Various changes, alternatives and modifications will become apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art following a reading of the foregoing specification. It is intended that any such changes, alternatives and modifications as fall within the scope of the appended claims be considered part of the present invention.